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# SSI Special Report

## Emerging German National Command and Operational Control Structures

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UNCLASSIFIED

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE

## REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved  
OMB No. 0704-0188

1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified			1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS		
2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY			3. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF REPORT		
2b. DECLASSIFICATION / DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE			Approved for public release; distribution unlimited		
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)  ACN 92042			5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)		
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION Strategic Studies Institute		6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable)  AWCI	7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION		
6c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)  U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Bks Carlisle, PA 17013-5050			7b. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)		
8a. NAME OF FUNDING / SPONSORING ORGANIZATION		8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable)	9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER		
8c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)			10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS		
			PROGRAM ELEMENT NO.	PROJECT NO.	TASK NO.
			WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO.		
11. TITLE (Include Security Classification)  Emerging German National Command and Operational Control Structures (U)					
12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) Young, Thomas-Durell					
13a. TYPE OF REPORT Final		13b. TIME COVERED FROM _____ TO _____		14. DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day) 92/08/26	
				15. PAGE COUNT 18	
16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION					
17. COSATI CODES			18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)		
FIELD	GROUP	SUB-GROUP	German national command and operational control structure; Federal Armed Forces; task force cadres		
19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)  The Strategic Studies Institute published a Special Report in March entitled <u>Bundeswehr Plans for a National Command and Control Structure</u> . Subsequent to the publication of this report, Federal Defense Minister Gerhard Stoltenberg resigned and the new Federal Minister of Defense, Volker Ruehe, has rejected plans for the creation of an Armed Forces Command Headquarters. Rather, what is now being considered is to strengthen the three individual service headquarters, and should national military operations take place, task force structures are to be organized. The reason for this turn in events is apparently due to financial, personnel, and political limitations. The author presents background on the rationale for a national command and operational control structure which ameliorates the responsibilities of the Chief of Staff of the Federal Armed Forces, and then considers the implications of its rejection by Federal Minister Ruehe.					
20. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> SAME AS RPT. <input type="checkbox"/> DTIC USERS			21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified		
22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL Marianne P. Cowling			22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code) (717) 245-3234		22c. OFFICE SYMBOL AWCI

**EMERGING GERMAN NATIONAL COMMAND AND  
OPERATIONAL CONTROL STRUCTURES**

Thomas-Durell Young

August 26, 1992

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## NOTICES

The author would like to express his sincere appreciation to LTC William T. Johnsen for his helpful comments made on an early draft of this paper and numerous serving officers in the *Bundeswehr* and officials in the *BMVg* for their assistance in preparing this report. Mr. Daniel Weisbaum of Cologne, FRG, provided yeoman service in providing translations of German press reports and vetting translations done in house.

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## FOREWORD

In spring of this year, the Strategic Studies Institute published a Special Report entitled, *Bundeswehr Plans for a National Command and Control Structure*. The perishability of the information and the fast pace of events in the Federal Republic of Germany resulted in the publication of that brief report so that the defense and analytical community could be aware of these potentially important plans for the *Bundeswehr*. Subsequent to the publication of the report, the new Federal Defense Minister, Volker Ruehe, rejected the plans for the creation of a national command and operational control structure for the *Bundeswehr*, as outlined in that special report. Feeling a sense of responsibility to ensure that its readership stays aware of current developments, the Strategic Studies Institute continued to monitor this situation with the objective of printing a follow-on report describing German planning objectives.

It is now possible to describe current plans for a German national command and operational control structure. The author of this report, Dr. Thomas-Durell Young, presents background on the rationale for a national command and operational control structure which ameliorates the responsibilities of the Chief of Staff of the Federal Armed Forces, and then considers the implications of its rejection by Federal Minister Ruehe. While information is still scant, he describes and analyzes the emerging command and operational control organization of the *Bundeswehr*. This structure is to rely on existing headquarters, augmented by task force cadres, which will be activated as required.

This report constitutes another contribution to meeting SSI's annual research objectives as established in, *The Army's Strategic Role in a New World Order: A Prioritized Research Program, 1992*.



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## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR**

THOMAS-DURELL YOUNG was a National Security Affairs Analyst at the Strategic Studies Institute from 1988 to 1991, and since then, an Associate Research Professor. Prior to this appointment, he was a country risk analyst for BERI, S.A., a Swiss-based consulting firm. Dr. Young received his Ph.D. from the Graduate Institute of International Studies, University of Geneva, Switzerland; his M.A. from the School of Advanced International Studies, The Johns Hopkins University; and is a 1990 graduate of the U.S. Army War College. He has published extensively on U.S. alliance issues with particular emphasis on Western Europe and the Southwest Pacific.

## **GLOSSARY**

<b>Abteilung(en)</b>	<b>department(s)</b>
<b>Bundesmarine</b>	<b>Federal Navy</b>
<b>Bundesministerium der Verteidigung (BMVg)</b>	<b>Federal Ministry of Defense</b>
<b>Bundeswehr</b>	<b>Federal Armed Forces</b>
<b>Erlass</b>	<b>ministerial decree</b>
<b>Fuehrungsbereitschaft(en)</b>	<b>readiness command group(s)</b>
<b>Fuehrungsstab der Streitkraefte--Fue S</b>	<b>Central Staff of the BMVg</b>
<b>Generalinspekteur der Bundeswehr</b>	<b>Chief of Staff of the Federal Armed Forces</b>
<b>Grundgesetz</b>	<b>Basic Law (the Federal Republic's Constitution)</b>
<b>Heeresfuehrungskommando</b>	<b>Army Operations Command</b>
<b>Inspekteur</b>	<b>Chief of Staff</b>
<b>Luftwaffe</b>	<b>Air Force</b>
<b>Streitkraeftefuehrungs- kommando</b>	<b>Armed Forces Command</b>

## EMERGING GERMAN NATIONAL COMMAND AND OPERATIONAL CONTROL STRUCTURES

In an earlier SSI Special Report (*Bundeswehr Plans for a National Command and Control Structure*, March 24, 1992), the *Bundesministerium der Verteidigung*--BMVg's (Federal Ministry of Defense) emerging concepts of a future German national command structure were presented and analyzed. Subsequent to the publication of said report, Federal Minister of Defense Gerhard Stoltenberg resigned from his post on March 31, 1992, and was replaced by Volker Ruehe.<sup>1</sup> One of the major results of this change in political leadership over the *Bundeswehr* (Federal Armed Forces) has been a major alteration in the emerging national command and operational control structure of that organization. Federal Minister of Defense Ruehe's rejection of the BMVg's proposal, and the subsequent confusion surrounding future national command structures, warrant brief analysis and assessment. Additional details on the events surrounding this controversy and its implications for the state of civil-military affairs in the Federal Republic can be found in a forthcoming study by this institute.<sup>2</sup>

### The BMVg's Proposal for Reform.

Since its creation in 1955, the *Bundeswehr* has lacked a structure to control centrally the three independent services. The Central, or what is sometimes referred to as the Joint, Staff of the BMVg (*Fuehrungsstab der Streitkraefte*--Fue S) is



simply not structured to exercise operational control over *Bundeswehr* units.<sup>3</sup> In approaching the reform of the *Bundeswehr*'s operational command structure, the *BMVg* was confronted with a number of constitutional and administrative restrictions. Under constitutional provisions and administrative directives of the Federal Republic, the creation of a national joint command and control structure can only be accomplished, as is the case in any democracy, within specific legal confines. Articles 65(a) and 115(b) of the *Grundgesetz* ("Basic Law" or constitution of the Federal Republic) stipulate that command over the *Bundeswehr* is exercised by the Federal Minister of Defense during peacetime, to be transferred to the Federal Chancellor upon the promulgation of a state of defense. These articles enshrine the concept of civilian political control over the military.

A further definition of the relationship between the Federal Minister of Defense and his chief military advisor, the *Generalinspekteur der Bundeswehr* (Chief of Staff of the Federal Armed Forces), occurred on March 21, 1970, in the form of what has become known as the "*Blankeneser Erlass*," or ministerial decree, signed by then Federal Minister of Defense, Helmut Schmidt. Under existing administrative regulations, the *Generalinspekteur der Bundeswehr* is not directly in the chain of command between the Federal Chancellor/Federal Minister of Defense and the *Inspekteur* (Chief of Staff) of the individual

services, or even NATO command structures. In consequence, his position is advisory only and he has no organizational authority to exercise, or directly influence, operational control over the German armed services. The three individual service *Inspekteur* are also limited by this decree to exercising peacetime command and control over their respective services.<sup>4</sup>

In view of the various legal and ministerial guidelines outlined above, as well as the politically sensitive nature of restructuring the command and control structures of the *Bundeswehr*, the *BMVg* proposed the following solution (see Figure 1).<sup>5</sup> The proposal called for a *Streitkraeftefuehrungskommando* (Armed Forces Command) to be established at Koblenz. Since it would not be possible to maintain a large standing joint headquarters due to personnel reductions,<sup>6</sup> the standing complement of the *Streitkraeftefuehrungskommando* would comprise approximately 80 to 100 individuals and it would largely limit itself to planning national joint operations.<sup>7</sup> From the perspective of the *BMVg*, this proposed joint headquarters would be capable of supporting a wide range of military operations, to include crisis management.

As an interim measure, until the *Streitkraeftefuehrungskommando* could be created, existing *Fuehrungsbereitschaften* (readiness command groups) would be expanded. *Fuehrungsbereitschaften* exist in each of the civilian and military

# BMVg Proposal for a New Command and Control Structure

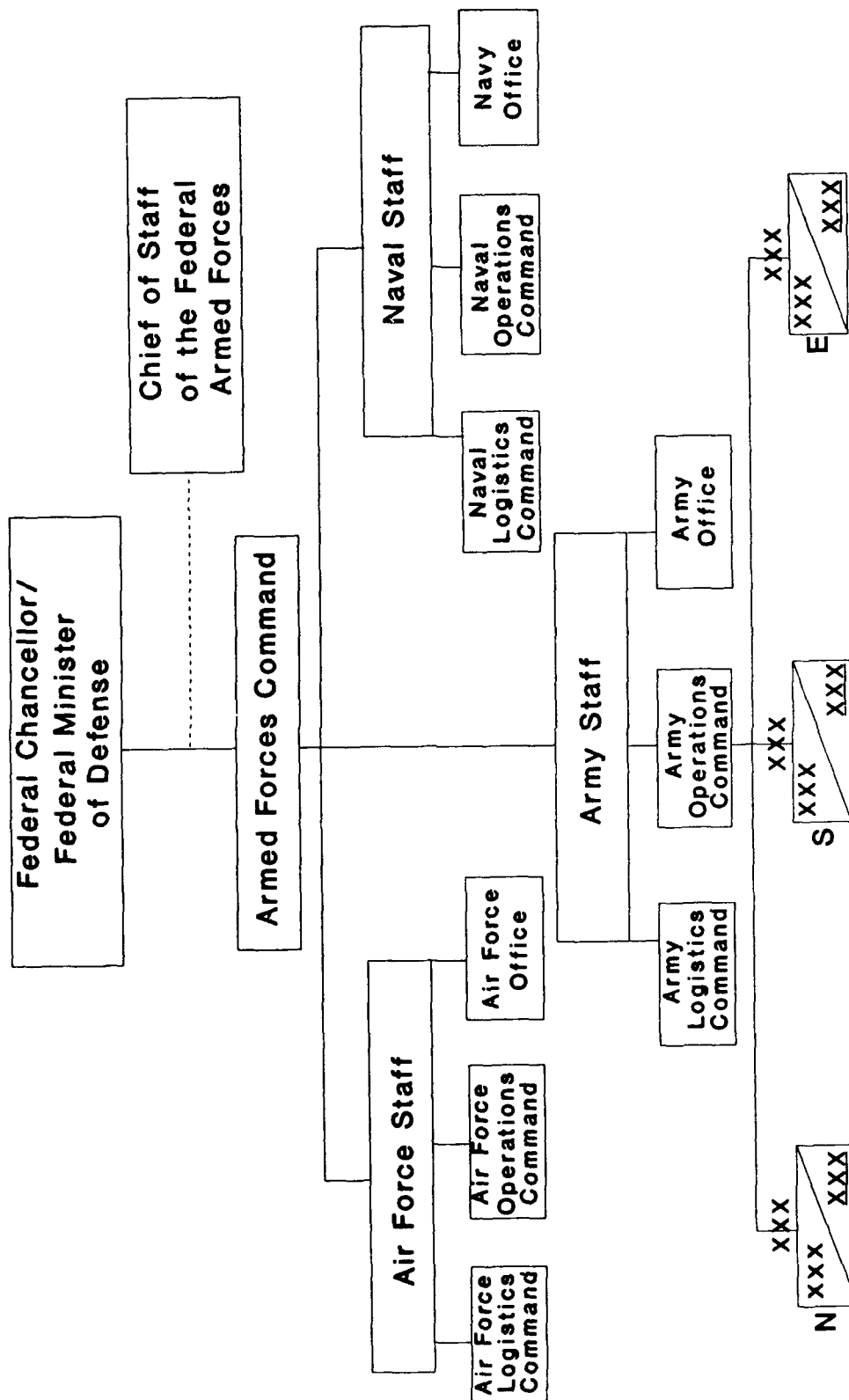


Figure 1

*Abteilungen* (departments), to include *Fue S*, and *Fuehrungsbereitschaft BMVg*. The latter comprises personnel from all *Abteilungen* of the *BMVg*, and it has been proposed that it should be upgraded to manage more effectively crisis situations.

This proposed joint headquarters, it must be stressed, would be distinct from the new *Heeresfuehrungskommando* (Army Operations Command) also being established in Koblenz at the previous home of *III Korps*. This headquarters, of approximately 100 personnel, will be led by a three-star general and will exercise command and control over the three Army Corps for national tasks and coordinate plans with NATO headquarters.<sup>8</sup> Its span of control is envisaged to encompass approximately 300 posts. Moreover, it was the intention of the *BMVg* that this command would be given priority in its creation (i.e., allocation of personnel) and, consequently, would be fused to the *Streitkraeftefuehrungskommando*, when required, to provide crucial command support to its joint counterpart. The *Luftwaffe* (Air Force) and *Bundesmarine* (Federal Navy) already have operational control capabilities, of varying degrees of span of operational control. Where deficiencies exist (e.g., national air policing and air defense), improvements in command and control capabilities are to be instituted.

Finally, according to certain German press reports, these proposed changes in the command structure were to include

giving the *Generalinspekteur* greater authority over the three service chiefs and improved access to the Federal Chancellor and the Federal Security Council and thereby change elements of the *Blankeneser Erlass*.<sup>9</sup> This initiative would have increased the influence of the office of the *Generalinspekteur*, by placing him, to an unspecified degree, within the chain of command between the political authorities and the service chiefs. This would have relegated the responsibilities of the three service chiefs to largely administrative and training functions.

Thus, the *BMVg* proposed creating a small joint headquarters that could, when required, exercise national operational control over joint *Bundeswehr* forces. Should circumstances require a national military response, the Federal Chancellor or the Federal Minister of Defense would designate a joint task force commander. To maintain the legal principle of civilian command over the military, the Federal Chancellor/ Federal Minister of Defense would grant operational control authority of specified *Bundeswehr* units to the joint task force commander, for a clearly defined mission and specific period of time. By following these provisions, the *BMVg* felt that it could employ *Bundeswehr* units for national, European or U.N. operations, without changing current law and regulations.

## Rejection.

In April 1992, Federal Defense Minister Ruehe rejected the BMVg's proposal to create the *Streitkraeftefuehrungskommando*, and to change the responsibilities of the *Generalinspekteur der Bundeswehr*.<sup>10</sup> His rationale is not exactly clear, although a flurry of negative (and at times erroneous) press reports cannot be rejected as having had an impact on Ruehe's decision.<sup>11</sup> An important consideration, as well, is that the need to reduce the *Bundeswehr* to 370,000 by the end of 1994, accompanied by the inability to force personnel with redundant specialties and ranks to leave the service, have resulted in a shortage of suitable staff officers to man headquarters throughout the *Bundeswehr* and NATO. Attempts to rectify these difficulties though shifting personnel within the Federal Armed Forces have been opposed by the government due to not wishing to create the perception that it intends to evade the personnel limits of the Army, as restricted by the Two-Plus-Four Treaty.<sup>12</sup>

In consequence, the BMVg has had to adapt its command and operational control reorganization to conform to the political dictates of the Federal Minister of Defense. Instead of the original proposal, what appears to be evolving (see Figure 2)<sup>13</sup> is a command and operational control structure whereby emphasis

# Emerging German Command and Control Structure

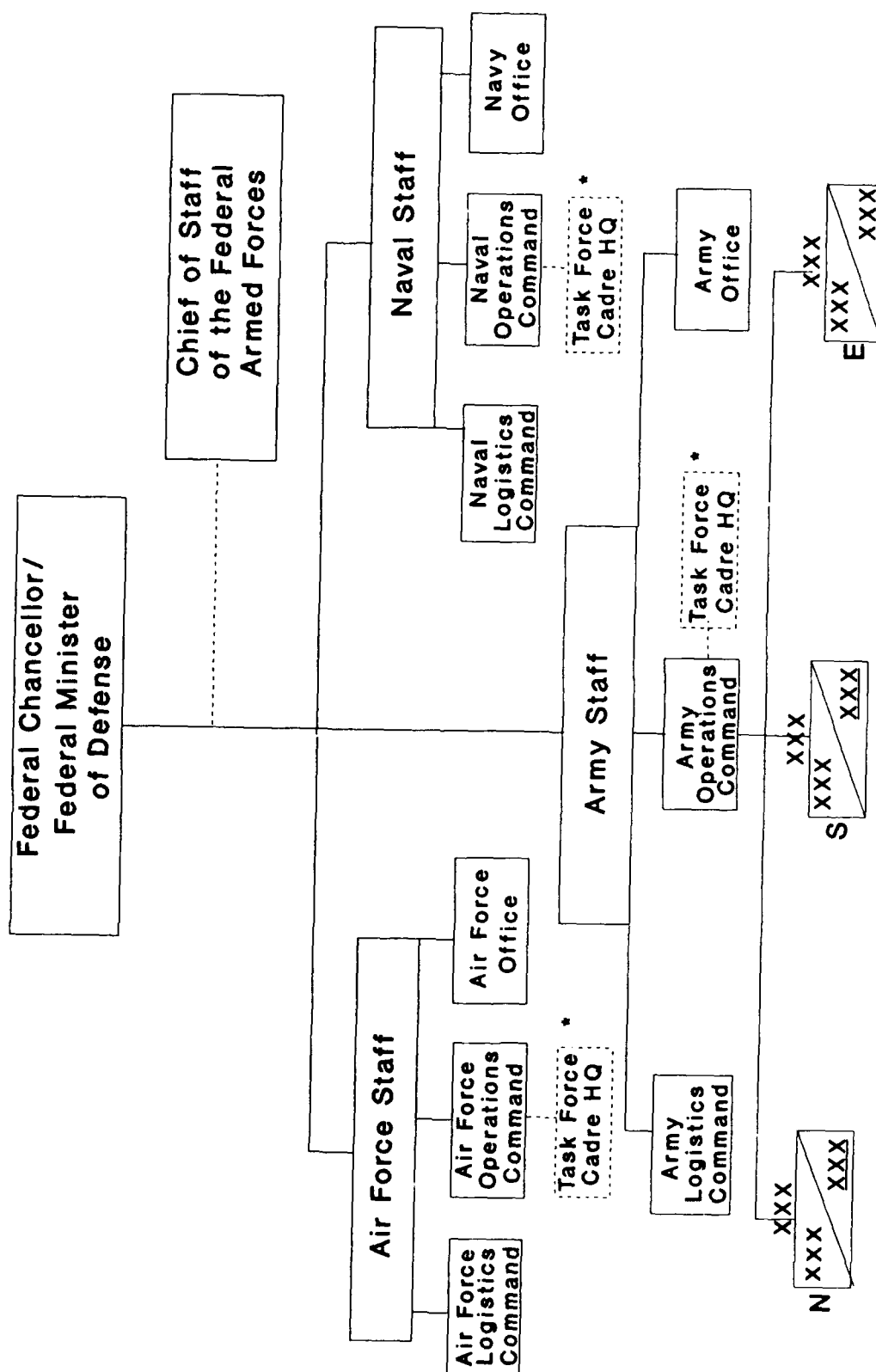


Figure 2  
•Includes liaison personnel from other services

will be placed on improving existing service command organizations, augmented by *Fuehrungsbereitschaften*, and employing the task force principle for responding to national crises. When activated by the Federal Chancellor/Federal Defense Minister, one of the three service operations commands would be given the task of forming an *ad hoc* task force, likely to be made of elements from all three services. The task force commander will report to his immediate operations commander, who will turn report to the service *Inspekteur*, who will be under the direct command of the Federal Chancellor/Federal Minister of Defense. "Jointness" will be effected through the presence of service liaison officers in each of the operational commands of the three services. This will require, of course, all forces and operational control structures to be more flexible than they have been in the past, in order to respond to multi-role requirements. In any case, this structure can only be assessed as being suitable for the immediate, as opposed to the emerging, command and operational control requirements of the *Bundeswehr*.<sup>14</sup>

#### Observations.

Numerous military implications emanate from the decision not to create a joint command and operational control headquarters, let alone increase the authority of the *Generalinspekteur der Bundeswehr*:



Joint Command and Operational Control Headquarters:

- o It is not necessarily imperative for the *Bundeswehr* to have such a structure, although its creation could have a positive effect on improving the joint command and operational control capabilities of the *Bundeswehr*.
- o In view of the rejection of the creation of the *Streitkraeftefuehrungskommando*, it is likely that greater importance and expectations will be placed on the *Heeresfuehrungskommando*. This is only logical since the Army has traditionally been the undisputed senior service in the *Bundeswehr*. It would be difficult to imagine any sizeable national employment of *Bundeswehr* assets, without the employment of this headquarters.
- o Moreover, the May 1992 decision by France and the Federal Republic to create a European Corps headquarters, to be located in Strasbourg, could have played a role in deciding not to establish the *Streitkraeftefuehrungskommando*, given the severe personnel limitations facing the *Bundeswehr*. To be sure, for out-of-area operations, the employment of such a command structure could be made politically-palatable in the Federal Republic, and indeed this could well be the rationale behind Bonn's enthusiastic support for this formation. However, it would be naive on the part of Bonn to think that this

multinational headquarters could be employed for national operations.

Responsibilities of the Generalinspekteur der Bundeswehr:

- o The decision on the part of Federal Defense Minister Ruehe not to alter the status of the *Generalinspekteur* in regard to command issues is a mistake.
- o Under current arrangements, and even with an improved task force capability of each of the service headquarters, the fact remains that the *Generalinspekteur*, as the senior military advisor, is left out of the command process. In essence, a situation exists where no one military official has overall responsibility.
- o A similar situation existed in the United States which prompted the passage of the 1986 Defense Reorganization Act ("Goldwater-Nichols Act"). Under current arrangements, U.S. commanders-in-chief in the field report to National Command Authority *through* the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
- o Notwithstanding historical sensitivities in the Federal Republic over the role of the military in civil affairs, enhancing the command responsibilities of the *Generalinspekteur* would not affect the relationship between civil officials and military officers. Civilian authorities would continue to command, while military officers would

continue to exercise operational control, but with the advantage of better defining responsibilities.

- o Unless Bonn faces the fact that it has unilaterally decided to maintain a key element of self-singularization of its defense structures, it will inhibit the effective employment of the *Bundeswehr* in future humanitarian and military operations. Civil control over the military can be maintained while effecting necessary improvements in the command and operational control structure of the *Bundeswehr*.

#### ENDNOTES

1. See, *The New York Times*, April 1, 1992.
2. See, Thomas-Durell Young, *The Normalization of the Federal Republic of Germany's Defense Structures*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, forthcoming.
3. Concerning the BMVg's inability to provide adequate direction in military operations see *Konteradmiral a.D. Elmar Schmaehling's* article in, *Der Spiegel*, April 20, 1992, p. 93.
4. See, *Welt am Sonntag* (Hamburg), March 1, 1992.
5. Information provided by official German sources.
6. See, *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* (Muenchen), December 7, 1991.
7. The issue of "planning" should not be underestimated. Heretofore, the *Bundeswehr* has not possessed national war plans, these being provided by SACEUR's General Defense Plans, executed at the AFCENT, Allied Tactical Air Force and Army Group levels. Now that eastern Germany currently falls outside of NATO operational control structures and there may be national command structures in the *Bundeswehr*, it is only logical that national war planning should take place. However, one would expect that

this will largely deal with the defense of eastern Germany (at least until 1995) and out-of-area campaigns, all of which would probably be effected in conjunction with Alliance efforts.

8. See, Erhard Drews, et al., "Das neue deutsche Heer: Zielsetzung, Konzeption, und Elemente der Heeresstruktur 5," *Truppenpraxis*, Volume 35, No. 4, July-August 1991, pp. 362-365.

9. See for instance, *Welt am Sonntag* (Hamburg), March 1, 1992.

10. See, *Koelner Stadt-Anzeiger*, April 6, 1992; and, *Der Spiegel* (Hamburg), April 20, 1992, p. 93.

11. For example see, *Der Spiegel* (Hamburg), April 6, 1992.

12. For instance, Former Federal Defense Minister Stoltenberg attempted, without success, in early 1992 to increase the size of the Army by 3,100 at the expense of the Navy. See, *Der Spiegel* (Hamburg), February 10, 1992, p. 16.

13. Information provided by official German sources.

14. See, Peter Vogler, "Schluessige Daten," *Wehrtechnik*, Volume 24 (5) May 1992, pp. 43-48.